

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 06992 01 OF 04 211826Z
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5030

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 MADRID 06992

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN

PLEASE PASS ICA

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: PEPR, SS, US
SUBJECT: PUBLIC AFFAIRS STRATEGY FOR THE AMBASSADOR

REE: USICA 10858; TODMAN-EATON TELCON OF 6/14

THIS IS A JOINT EMBASSY ICA MESSAGE.

1. SUMMARY. AS WASHINGTON IS AWARE, THE APPOINTMENT OF AMBASSADOR TODMAN HAS ELICITED CONSIDERABLE PRESS COMMENTARY IN SPAIN, MUCH OF IT, ESPECIALLY FROM THE MORE LEFTIST PRESS, CRITICAL OF THE AMBASSADOR'S ALLEGED LACK OF COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS. WHILE WE BELIEVE A ROUGH MEDIA RECEPTION PROBABLY LAY IN STORE FOR WHOEVER WAS NAMED THE FIRST NEW AMBASSADOR TO SPAIN AFTER FRANCO, AND WILL LARGELY DISSIPATE IN ITS MORE SENSATIONALIST ASPECTS ONCE THE AMBASSADOR IS ESTABLISHED IN MADRID, IT IS NONETHELESS A MANIFESTATION OF THE SUSPICION, IF NOT HOSTILITY, WITH WHICH THE U.S. IS VIEWED BY A SIGNIFICANT SEGMENT OF LOCAL NEWSPAPERMEN. THUS, ANY NEWS EMANATING
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FROM THE UNITED STATES THAT HAS A SPANISH CONNECTION AND IS UNFAVORABLE TO US WILL INEVITABLY BE PLAYED UP IN THE SPANISH PRESS. ALTHOUGH SOME OF THIS CRITICISM ORIGINATES WITH IDEOLOGICALLY COMMITTED ANTI-U.S. ELEMENTS WHOSE OPINIONS ARE NOT ABOUT TO CHANGE, MUCH OF IT COMES FROM THOSE WHO, EVEN THOUGH CONSIDERING THEMSELVES LEFTISTS, ARE NOT IRREVERSIBLY

HOSTILE TO THE U.S. AND ARE WILLING TO GIVE US A RELATIVELY FAIR HEARING. MANY OF THEM ARE DEEPLY COMMITTED TO AND CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR OWN DEMOCRATIC EXPERIMENT AND ARE SKEPTICAL OF, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE SINCERITY AND DEPTH OF OUR OWN COMMITMENT TO SPANISH DEMOCRACY, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF OUR PAST RECORD OF ASSOCIATION WITH FRANCO. WE BELIEVE IT IS BOTH NECESSARY TO OUR INTERESTS AND POSSIBLE OVER TIME TO REACH THIS SECTOR OF THE SPANISH PRESS. A CENTRAL ELEMENT IN THIS EFFORT WILL OF COURSE BE THE RELATIONSHIP THE AMBASSADOR ESTABLISHES WITH THESE JOURNALISTS AND WITH KEY SPANISH PUBLISHERS AND EDITORS AS WELL. AS A FIRST STEP IN STRUCTURING THESE RELATIONS, WE PROVIDE HEREIN OUR RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING BOTH THE FORM AND SUBSTANCE OF HIS MEDIA-RELATED ACTIVITIES DURING HIS FIRST MONTHS IN SPAIN. END SUMMARY.

2. SPANISH MEDIA COVERAGE OF AMBASSADOR TODMAN'S NOMINATION WAS PREDICTABLY HEAVY DURING THE TWO MONTHS (APRIL AND MAY) FOLLOWING THE FIRST RUMORS THAT HE WAS TO BE NAMED TO MADRID. DURING APRIL AND MAY WE COLLECTED ALMOST 200 NEWSPAPER AND MAGAZINE ARTICLES ON THIS SUBJECT (ALL OF WHICH HAVE BEEN POUCHED TO THE DEPARTMENT). MANY OF THESE STORIES FACTUALLY ANNOUNCED THE NOMINATION, AS DID SPANISH CONFIDENTIAL

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RADIO (PARTLY GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED) AND TELEVISION (COMPLETELY GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED). SOME ARTICLES APPLAUDED THE ANNOUNCEMENT, BUT AN UNFORTUNATE NUMBER EXPRESSED CRITICISM OF THE CHOICE, WITH ALMOST ALL OF THIS NEGATIVE COMMENT CENTERING AROUND THE AMBASSADOR'S ALLEGED DIFFERENCES WITH THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION ON QUESTIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RELATIONS WITH THE DICTATORSHIPS OF THE SOUTHERN CONE. SOME OF THESE STORIES ALSO CONTAINED RACIAL SLURS AND IMPLIED AN UNDERLYING QUESTION REGARDING THE AMBASSADOR'S QUALIFICATIONS. MANY OF THEM WERE ILLUSTRATED BY A PHOTOGRAPH OF AMBASSADOR TODMAN SHAKING HANDS WITH PINOCHET...VIRTUALLY THE ONLY PHOTO USED. THIS COVERAGE HAS TRAILED OFF IN JUNE AND WE ANTICIPATE THAT IT WILL CONTINUE AT A RELATIVELY LOW LEVEL UNTIL HIS ARRIVAL IN SPAIN, WHEN SOME OF THE PREVIOUS CHARGES WILL BE WARMED OVER.

3. THIS CRITICISM -- GIVEN THE FACT THAT THE SOURCE OF MUCH OF IT WAS CLEARLY IN THE US PRESS -- WAS NOT SURPRISING, EMANATING AS IT DID FROM A PRESS THAT TENDS TO BE HOSTILE TO THE U.S. MOST SPANISH JOURNALISTS

PROUDLY CONSIDER THEMSELVES "LEFTISTS" OF SOME DESCRIPTION, WITH ALL THAT MAY IMPLY FOR THEIR OBJECTIVITY AND ATTITUDE TOWARD THE U.S. EVEN IN THE CENTER AND ON THE RIGHT, MANY SPANISH PAPERS OFTEN FIND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO RESIST A CHEAP SHOT, AND U.S. PRESS ALLEGATIONS THAT THE AMBASSADOR IS SOMEHOW "SOFT" ON HUMAN RIGHTS PROVIDED A TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY THAT MANY PAPERS AND MAGAZINES, HIGHLY SENSITIZED TO HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES AFTER 40 YEARS OF AUTHORITARIANISM AND LOOKING FOR SENSATIONALIST ARTICLES

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 04 MADRID 06992

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN

PLEASE PASS ICA

TO SEE NEWSPAPERS IN THIS HIGHLY COMPETITIVE MARKET,
SIMPLY COULD NOT RESIST.

4. IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT UNDER PRESENT SPANISH CIRCUMSTANCES, THE ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST NEW AMERICAN AMBASSADOR SINCE THE DEATH OF FRANCO PRESENTED THE ANTI-US ELEMENT OF THE PRESS THE OPPORTUNITY TO VENTILATE THEIR RESENTMENT OVER OUR PAST SUPPORT FOR THE FRANCO REGIME AND RIGHTIST DICTATORSHIPS GENERALLY, AS WELL AS OVER US "HEGEMONY" IN THE WEST, AND THEIR SUSPICIONS ABOUT THE SINCERITY AND DEPTH OF OUR COMMITMENT TO SPANISH DEMOCRACY. CONSEQUENTLY, ANY NEW AMBASSADOR WAS INEVITABLY GOING TO FACE SOMETHING OF A ROUGH RIDE IN A SUBSTANTIAL PART OF THE MEDIA, AT LEAST AT THE OUTSET. FURTHERMORE, THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE CRITICAL ARTICLES--AND ALMOST ALL OF THE MORE VIRULENT ONES--PREDICTABLY APPEARED IN THE MORE LEFTIST PRESS. IN ALMOST EVERY CASE THESE ARTICLES WERE SPARKED BY AND BUILT AROUND

CRITICAL STORIES SOURCED TO THE NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST. FORTUNATELY, THESE CRITICISMS HAVE NOW ENGENDERED A REACTION OF THEIR OWN AMONG MANY RESPONSIBLE
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SPANIARDS, WHO SAY THEY ARE INCENSED BY THE AMBASSADOR'S PATENTLY UNFAIR AND PREJUDICED TREATMENT AT THE HANDS OF THE SPANISH PRESS, AND THIS HAS RESULTED IN SEVERAL VERY FAVORABLE ARTICLES, THE MOST POSITIVE OF WHICH WAS WRITTEN BY WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT OF "ABC" AND PUBLISHED IN THAT NEWSPAPER JUNE 17 (SEE BELOW AND SEPTTEL).

5. A SAMPLING OF ADVERSE PRESS COMMENTARY, SOME OF WHICH DOES NOT MARKEDLY DIFFER IN TONE FROM PERIODIC PREJUDICED AND INACCURATE BLASTS DIRECTED AT FORMER AMBASSADOR STABLER, FOLLOWS:

--TODMAN IS "A DANGEROUS IDEOLOGUE" (CAMBIO 16, LEFT-CENTER, SPAIN'S MOST IMPORTANT WEEKLY). "WE HAVE THE BLACK (I.E., "TENEMOS LA NEGRA" IS A PUN REFERRING TO RACE AND MISFORTUNE)...TERENCE TODMAN, THE MAN WHO UNDOED CARTER'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY IN LATIN AMERICA;" (CAMBIO 16).

--HE "KNOCKED DOWN A GOOD PART OF THE STRUCTURE BUILT BY CARTER" IN HUMAN RIGHTS (QUE, LEFT SENSATIONALIST).

--"TODMAN WAS THE WHITE HOUSE REPRESENTATIVE...IN CHILE WHEN THE COUP FINISHED ALLENDE...THANKS A LOT, CARTER"

--"IT IS NOT IN GOOD TASTE, LISTEN, TO SEND US A 'PINOCHETIST' AMBASSADOR..." (PUEBLO, LABOR ORIENTED, CONSERVATIVE-LINING ON SOME ISSUES, VAGUELY LEFTIST ON OTHERS).

--"TODMAN: A U.S. HAWK TO LAND IN MADRID;" (TELEXPRES, CENTRIST).

--"IT APPEARS THAT TERENCE TODMAN WAS IMPLICATED IN THE
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COUPS OF PINOCHET AND VIDELA;" (MUNDO DIARIO, LEFTIST).

--"A NEGRO ULTRA-RIGHTIST IS COMING TO SPAIN;" (CATALUNA EXPRES, CENTRIST).

--"DO YOU PLAN TO BE AN UNCLE TOM IN SPAIN?" (LA CALLE,

PCE-LINING).

6. IN REACTION TO THESE JOURNALISTIC EXCESSES, A NUMBER OF FACTUAL AND FAVORABLE COMMENTARIES ALSO HAVE APPEARED:

--"ANY COMMENTARY...DENOTING RACISM TOWARD TODMAN UNNECESSARILY PREJUDICES SPANISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS..." (INFORMACIONES, CENTRIST).

--"TODMAN, AN UNCOMMON AMBASSADOR...TO SUPPOSE THAT WASHINGTON WOULD TODAY, IN SITUATIONS AS FLUID AS THAT OF SPAIN, GIVE EMBASSIES TO PERSONS LESS THAN HIGHLY QUALIFIED IS TO IGNORE REALITY...TODMAN HAS FOLLOWED TO THE LETTER THE TACTICAL PROGRAM OF HIS CHIEF..." THIS ARTICLE ALSO EXTENSIVELY AND APPROVINGLY QUOTES AFL-CIO SPEECH. (ARRIBA, CENTRIST, PRO-GOVERNMENT).

--"HIS POLITICAL CAREER IS BRILLIANT AND HE IS WELL CONNECTED TO THE SPANISH-SPEAKING WORLD...A FAITHFUL INTERPRETER OF ADMINISTRATION FOREIGN POLICY;" (ABC AND DIARIO DE BARCELONA, CONSERVATIVE).

--"...HE SEEMS TO US, IN EQUAL PARTS, A PREPARED AND SENSITIVE PROFESSIONAL, WHOM A COUNTRY THAT IS INAUGURATING DEMOCRACY CAN FEEL PROUD TO RECEIVE AS AMBASSADOR." (FULL-PAGE ARTICLE IN JUNE 17 ABC).

7. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF CRITICAL PRESS COVERAGE OF AMBASSADOR TODMAN'S CONFIDENTIAL

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APPOINTMENT, MISSION OFFICERS, FROM THE AMBASSADOR

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5032

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 04 MADRID 06992

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN

PLEASE PASS ICA

DOWN, PARTICIPATED IN REFUTING AND CORRECTING INACCURACIES, MISSTATEMENTS AND MISINTERPRETATIONS. THE PRESS OFFICER, FOR EXAMPLE, UTILIZING PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES BY AMBASSADOR TODMAN, ANSWERED HOSTILE ARTICLES AS THEY APPEARED. STATEMENTS BY PRESS OFFICERS IN WASHINGTON, MRS. CARTER'S REMARKS IN COSTA RICA, AND AMBASSADOR TODMAN'S OWN REMARKS TO CORRESPONDENTS WERE ESPECIALLY USEFUL IN THIS REGARD. CALLS ON THE PUBLISHER OF CAMBIO 16 AND THE INTERNATIONAL EDITOR OF ABC DURING THE LAST TWO WEEKS TO DISCUSS COVERAGE OF AMBASSADOR TODMAN'S ARRIVAL ARE THE MOST RECENT EXAMPLES OF THIS CONTINUING EFFORT.

8. MISSION OFFICERS CONTINUE TO MAKE A POINT OF KEEPING THE RECORD STRAIGHT CONCERNING THE AMBASSADOR'S APPOINTMENT IN THEIR CONTACTS WITH POLITICAL LEADERS AND MEMBERS OF THE PRESS. AMONG OTHER THINGS, THEY POINT OUT THE ABSURDITY OF SPECULATION THAT ANY CAREER OFFICER WOULD BE "EXILED" TO AN IMPORTANT POST LIKE MADRID IF INDEED HE WERE OUT OF CONFIDENTIAL

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STEP WITH A BASIC ADMINISTRATION POLICY, SUCH AS HUMAN RIGHTS, AND OF CHARGES THAT AN AMERICAN BLACK, OF ALL PEOPLE, WOULD BE "SOFT" ON HUMAN RIGHTS. PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE HAVE BEEN PRIVATE STATEMENTS TO KEY POLITICAL FIGURES THAT THIS PRESS CAMPAIGN DOES NOT SO MUCH DENIGRATE AMBASSADOR TODMAN, BUT RATHER REFLECTS BADLY ON SPANISH JOURNALISM AND SPAIN ITSELF.

9. WE JUDGE THE CAMPAIGN WHICH HAS BEEN DIRECTED AGAINST THE AMBASSADOR TO HAVE BEEN LARGELY INEVITABLE, GIVEN THE PRESS TREATMENT EMANATING FROM THE UNITED STATES. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT, EXCEPT FOR THE MOST DEEPLY COMMITTED ANTI-US ELEMENTS OF THE LEFT AND RIGHT, THIS CAMPAIGN WILL LARGELY COLLAPSE OF ITS OWN DEAD WEIGHT, ONCE THE AMBASSADOR GETS HERE AND ESTABLISHES HIMSELF. SPECIFICALLY, WE OFFER THE

FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE AMBASSADOR'S DEALING WITH THE MEDIA DURING HIS FIRST WEEKS IN SPAIN, RECOMMENDATIONS, WE NOTE, THAT DO NOT VARY TO ANY MARKED DEGREE FROM "NORMAL" ICE-BREAKING PROCESS WHICH MOST US AMBASSADORS, UNDER PRESENT SPANISH CIRCUMSTANCES, WOULD LIKELY PURSUE:

-- ON ARRIVAL, A RELATIVELY BRIEF STATEMENT (WE PLAN TO CABLE SUGGESTED DRAFT TEXT) EMPHASIZING THE AMBASSADOR'S PLEASURE AT BEING ABLE TO SERVE IN SPAIN AT A TIME WHEN DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS ARE BEING FORGED. REMARKS ABOUT SPANISH DEMOCRACY COULD USEFULLY INCLUDE REFERENCES TO WHAT THE SPANISH EVOLUTION HAS MEANT IN TERMS OF BROADENING AND DEEPENING HUMAN RIGHTS IN SPAIN, SPECIFICALLY GUARANTEED IN NEW SPANISH CONSTITUTION, TOGETHER WITH AN ALLUSION TO THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S COMMITMENT TO HUMAN
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RIGHTS. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT NO Q'S AND A'S TAKE PLACE ON ARRIVAL AND THAT CONTACT WITH PRESS BE MINIMAL UNTIL AFTER PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS.

-- INTIMATE DINNERS OR LUNCHESES WITHIN THE FIRST FEW WEEKS OF HIS PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS WITH THE DIRECTORS (WHO OFTEN COMBINE MANAGING EDITOR AND PUBLISHER FUNCTIONS) OF THE MAJOR NATIONAL DAILIES AND IMPORTANT NEWS MAGAZINES AND OTHER MAJOR FIGURES IN THE COMMUNICATIONS FIELD. WE ARE THINKING AT THE OUTSET OF A LUNCH WITH THE DIRECTORS OF NINE PRINCIPAL NEWSPAPERS, TO BE FOLLOWED BY MORE INTIMATE FOLLOW-ON CONTACT WITH FOUR OR FIVE PRINCIPAL DIRECTORS. WE ALSO BELIEVE HE SHOULD SIMILARLY MEET EARLY ON THE DIRECTORS OF PRINCIPAL MAGAZINES AND EUROPA PRESS, EFE, AND RTVE.

-- CAMBIO 16, SPAIN'S MOST IMPORTANT NEWSWEEKLY WITH A CIRCULATION OF OVER 300,000, HAS OFFERED TO CARRY AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW BASED ON MUTUALLY AGREED QUESTIONS AND REVIEW OF TEXT OF AMBASSADORIAL RESPONSES. OUR LUCK WITH CAMBIO IN THE PAST HAS BEEN POOR, BUT, ON BALANCE, WE RECOMMEND THAT THIS OFFER BE ACCEPTED. IT COULD REPRESENT AN OPPORTUNITY TO BALANCE CAMBIO TREATMENT AND IS WORTH THE TRY. WE WOULD THEN FOLLOW UP WITH INTERVIEWS AND ARTICLES IN THEIR NEWS MAGAZINES BUT SUGGEST THAT WE DO NOT EXCEED THREE OR FOUR PER YEAR.

--LUNCH WITH THE RESIDENT AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS PLUS REUTERS AND AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE (BOTH OF

WHOM FILE EXTENSIVELY TO CLIENTS IN THE US). MANY
OF THEIR STORIES ARE PICKED UP AND PLAYED BACK BY
THE SPANISH PRESS.

-- A SERIES OF LUNCHESES WITH MOST IMPORTANT SPANISH
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COLUMNISTS AND REPORTERS.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5033

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 04 OF 04 MADRID 06992

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN

PLEASE PASS ICA

-- AN ADDRESS ON US FOREIGN POLICY, WITH SPECIAL
EMPHASIS ON US-SPANISH RELATIONS AS SOON AS A SUITABLE
OCCASION PRESENTS ITSELF AFTER THE INITIAL GET ACQUAINTED
PERIOD. MISSION WOULD ASSURE WIDESPREAD COVERAGE OF
SPEECH BY ARRANGING TO INVITE REPRESENTATIVES OF
SPANISH MEDIA.

-- PRESS CONFERENCES OR EFFORTS TO APPEAR ON TV ARE
NOT RECOMMENDED, ESPECIALLY IN FIRST FEW MONTHS AFTER
AMBASSADOR'S ARRIVAL.

10. IN SUM, WE BELIEVE AMBASSADOR SHOULD PROJECT
CONFIDENT AND DIGNIFIED IMAGE, WORK AT ESTABLISHING

CLOSE RELATIONS WITH KEY MEDIA PEOPLE, GIVE SELECTED
INTERVIEWS AND STATEMENTS BUT NOT OVERDO IT,
OTHERWISE LET HIS OWN CAPABILITIES SPEAK FOR THEM-
SELVES, AND AT ALL COSTS AVOID GIVING ANY POSSIBLE
IMPRESSION THAT WE ARE RUNNING SCARED OR
ATTEMPTING TO RESPOND TO A PRESS CAMPAIGN WHICH HAS
BEEN BENEATH CONTEMPT. TONE AMBASSADOR STRUCK IN HIS
REMARKS IN PUERTO RICO JUNE 13 WHICH WERE PICKED UP
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HERE SEEMS TO US JUST RIGHT. EATON

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